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# What To Do When Your HOME FREEZER STOPS

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# What to Do When Your HOME F

IF YOUR HOME FREEZER STOPS RUNNING and will be off for some time, you can take several steps to keep food from spoiling.

Keep the freezer closed.

Move the food to a locker plant.

Add dry ice if you can get it. To prevent burns, wear gloves when you handle dry ice.

### Keep Freezer Closed

Open the freezer only to take out the food for moving to a locker plant, or to add dry ice.

### Estimate Length of Time

Don't worry if you know you can have the freezer running again in a few hours.

When the freezer stops running, the power supply may be off or the freezer itself may be out of order.

1. If power is off, try to find out how long it will be off.

2. Consult the instruction book to determine if there is something you can do to put the freezer back into operation. Or—

3. Try to find out how long it will take to get a serviceman to put the freezer back in running order.

### Estimate How Long Food Will Keep

Try to estimate about how long the food will stay frozen. With the freezer closed, food will

# EEZER STOPS

usually stay frozen in a fully loaded cabinet 2 days; in a cabinet with less than half a load, not more than a day.

How long the food in your freezer will stay frozen depends on—

1. The amount of food in the freezer.
   A full freezer will stay cold many hours longer than a freezer only a quarter full.
2. The kind of food.
   A freezer full of meat will not warm up as fast as a freezer full of baked food.
3. The temperature of the food.
   The colder the food, the longer it will stay frozen.
4. The freezer itself.
   A well-insulated freezer will keep food frozen much longer than one with little insulation.
5. Size of freezer.
   The larger the freezer, the longer the food will stay frozen.

## Consider the Freezer-Locker Plant

Make arrangements well in advance with your local locker plant to take care of food in an emergency. Then, if an emergency occurs:

1. Call the locker plant to see if it is operating and, if so, whether it has room for your food. If space is available—

2. Wrap the food in plenty of newspapers and blankets, or use insulated boxes.

3. Rush the food to the locker plant.

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### Use Dry Ice If You Can Get It

If locker space is not available and it looks as though the freezer would be stopped for longer than a day, use dry ice if you can get it. The more dry ice you use, the longer the food will keep frozen.

Twenty-five pounds of dry ice should hold the temperature of a half-full 10-cubic-foot cabinet below freezing for 2 to 3 days. Food in a fully loaded cabinet will stay frozen for 3 to 4 days if you put the dry ice in soon after the freezer goes off. Use 50 pounds of dry ice for a 20-cubic-foot freezer. Put heavy cardboard directly on the packages of frozen food and then put the dry ice on top of the cardboard.

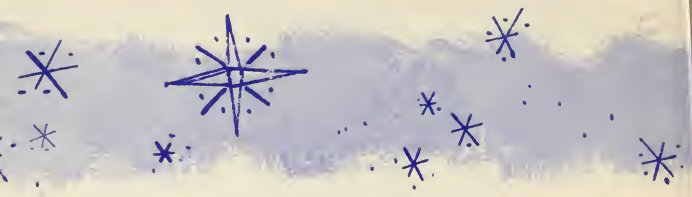
### A Standby Generator

If current failure is frequent and lasts for long periods of time, a standby generator may be a wise investment.

### Should You Cover the Freezer With Blankets?

If you have put dry ice into the cabinet, you may cover the freezer with blankets, quilts, or some other covering. It will help to put crumpled newspaper or excelsior between the cabinet and the blankets.

If you put blankets or other coverings on the freezer, be sure to pin or fasten them so that they will not cover the air-vent openings. The power may go on unexpectedly and ventilation will be needed.



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## What Should You Do With Food If It Thaws?

Occasionally, frozen foods are partially or completely thawed before you discover that the freezer is not operating. Partial thawing and refreezing does reduce the quality of foods, particularly fruits, vegetables, and prepared foods. Red meats are affected less than many other foods.

You may safely refreeze foods that have thawed if they still contain ice crystals or if they are still cold—about 40° F—and have been held at this temperature no longer than 1 or 2 days after thawing. Foods warmed to 40° F or higher are not likely to be fit for refreezing.

***You Can Refreeze Fruits.***

Fruits usually ferment when they start to spoil. A little fermentation will not make fruits dangerous to eat, but it may spoil their flavor. So you can refreeze thawed fruits if they still taste and smell good. Or you can use them in cooking and baking or for making jams, jellies, and preserves.

***Be Careful When You Refreeze Ground Meat, Poultry, and Seafood.***

Ground meat, poultry, and seafood become unsafe to eat when they start to spoil. Bacteria multiply rapidly in these foods. So don't refreeze any of these foods when they have thawed

completely. If ice crystals are still in the food, you can refreeze it immediately. Usually it is safe to do so, even though the quality may suffer. If the condition of the food is poor or questionable, get rid of it. It may be dangerous!

***Be Careful When You Refreeze Meats, Vegetables, and Cooked Foods.***

Examine each package of meat, vegetable, or cooked food before you decide what to do with it. If the color or odor of the thawed food is poor or questionable, get rid of the food. It may be dangerous!

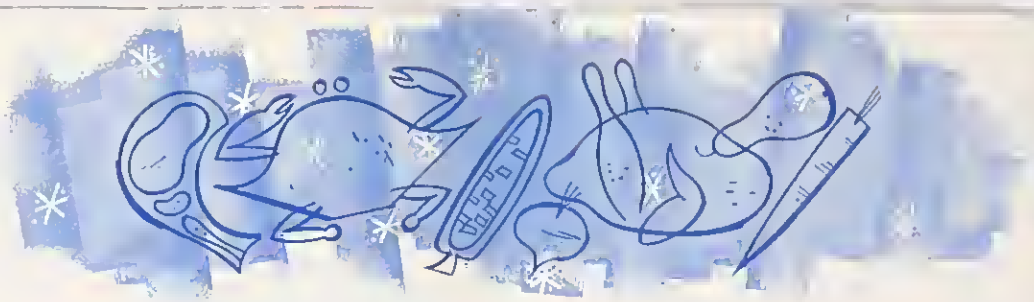
***Do Not Use Melted Ice Cream.***

## Refreeze Food Quickly

Clean your freezer before refilling. When you refreeze thawed food, freeze it quickly.

To get a quick refreeze, it is best to take the food to a commercial locker plant. Chill to 0° F or below before taking the food back to your home freezer. Wrap the food well with newspapers and blankets before moving it to or from the freezer plant.

To refreeze food at home, turn the adjustable temperature control, if your freezer has one, to its coldest position. When the current comes on again, the freezer will run continuously and



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food will freeze quicker. Place unfrozen packages against the refrigerated surface if possible, but pile them so air can circulate around them. After the food is well frozen, turn the temperature control to its usual setting. If the freezer is too full, move some of the colder packages to the refrigerator, and return them gradually to the freezer. Foods that have been frozen and thawed require the same care as foods that have never been frozen. Use refrozen foods as soon as possible.

## Be Prepared

1. Find out about your nearest locker plant. Arrange to take your food there in an emergency.

2. Try to locate a source of dry ice in your community.

3. During the seasons when power failure is frequent in your community, it's good insurance to run the freezer between 10° and 20° below zero.

4. In choosing a freezer, select one with good insulation. A well-insulated freezer keeps food cold hours longer than a poorly insulated one, when the power goes off.

5. Use care in preparing, packaging, and freezing food. The more sanitary you are in preparing food for the freezer, the better it will be able to withstand a stoppage of the freezer. Sanitary preparation means fewer bacteria to cause spoilage. Frozen bacteria are not dead bacteria; when they warm up they become active.

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Prepared by Evelyn B. Spindler, nutritionist, Extension Service, in consultation with the Consumer and Food Economics Institute, Agricultural Research Service.

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